

Nation

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Season's Greetings Christmas Celebration Guide



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As we gather with family & friends this Christmas season, let us give thanks to God our Creator for all that He has provided. May you all experience His peace and special love throughout the coming New Year.

We wish you all the joys of Christmas & blessings in the coming New Year. Let us move forward into the New Year with renewed faith, hope and love for one another.

God Bless & Merry Christmas to All.

Aymamontowi yak pagukotagnowak nayshtah kitotagminowak ahnooch aymakoshag wi pisimowak. Nanaskomatoos kichimanagto misiway kagkwahna kakimilikoyak.

Rahkiyahnawoo kagamaglitamowin nayshtah shakihiwagwin agti ooshki pipook.

Yak kiwahchagmikowoo agmochikaglitak nayshtah shawaylichikagwinnah agti oosh kipipowak. Nzikahn aggitapiyak kaki ahyanoon tapwaglitamowin, pahkosaglimowin, nayshtah sahki gitowin. Kichimanagto shawaylichikagwin nayshtah milomahkoshag kishikaho Nzikahn oochi.

From Chief Norm Hardisty Jr., Deputy Chief Carl Chzechoo, Council & Staff.



'Tis the season

by Will Nicholls

The holidays are full of promise and hope for many, but some lean to Ecclesiastes when they're left feeling that nothing matters. It feels like it's all the same because, "I have seen everything under the sun, and there is nothing new... nothing new under the sun."

Ecclesiastes even has a word of advice for young people, based on the theory that when you get old, you aren't going to like it. "Remember now thy creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them!"

But even so Ecclesiastes has hope as 10:19 says, "Bread is made for laughter and wine gladdens life." This means that there are simple things in life and enjoy them rather than seeing them as just another part of existence. Share your happiness freely and treasure these moments.

Some may judge you and tell you to take life seriously but take that with a grain of salt.

I have often asked why is it that so many religious followers are so deadly serious about nearly everything. Why is it that religion makes so many seem to lose their sense of humour? Did being baptized wash it away? I'm not alone in asking this as mainstream media shows religious followers as either wild-eyed fanatics bent on getting everybody to conform to their narrow view of reality, or grim-faced puritans who cannot take a joke.

It makes you wonder where the joy is and where the laughter went. Most religious writings encourage a lifestyle of joy. It means having the faith and the courage to expect God, the Creator, to offer you something that gives you joy, no matter how dismal the pattern of your life.

So whoever you may be, no matter what you have done, whatever the pain in your life right now and whatever circumstances surround you, look around and see what is giving you laughter and hope.

For those of you who have more than others, this is a time to remember our Cree traditions of sharing. It can be a smile, a joke, a contribution to the local food bank or presents or a nod of approval. Hopefully it will be all of the above.

The holiday celebrations are a time of joy and laughter and this is something our Creator wants for us. To enjoy life and to help others do the same. It is not a time to be serious and judge others because we can do that any other time of the year. This season is the occasion where you can share the joy and laughter that changed your life and may change others.

Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, Joyous Kwanzaa and Happy New Year from all of the *Nation* staff. Be safe, give generously to local food banks and to those who have less than we do. Don't drink and drive and make peace on Earth part of your community's holidays.

Contents

editorial

'Tis the season 3

rez notes

Search for Santa 4

news

Kashechewan endures 5

AFN chiefs march
on Parliament 7

features

Communities speak
about diverted rivers 10

Red red wine 17

Holiday flavours 23

We Day in Montreal 31

Cree youth descends
on Montreal 32

Legend:
The Disturbed Grave 36

Suicide conference 39

Summit on Addictions 45

borderlines

David beats Goliath 49

UTNS

First Nations will
rise to the challenges 51



photo by:
Jim Wallace

Which way is the North Pole?
I want my presents now!

Merry Christmas and send
out search and rescue by
New Year's day...



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Last December, Canadian news watchers were appalled by the crisis at Attawapiskat, a Cree community on the west coast of James Bay. Living in squalid conditions and lacking appropriate housing, running water, and electricity, the community and its concerns seemed to be dismissed by Aboriginal Affairs Minister John Duncan – at least, until Chief Theresa Spence declared a state of emergency, and the International Red Cross came in to help.

This year, it's not Attawapiskat that's in the spotlight. Rather, it's Kashechewan First Nation, a Cree nation roughly 90 km northwest of Attawapiskat, that's suffering. The problem this time is a combination of factors. You might remember that several years ago, Kashechewan First Nation suffered from flooding and water tainted with E. coli bacteria. The bacteria's gone, but the flooding remains a problem, and this year the community lost 21 houses to rising waters that destroyed home furnaces.

Meanwhile, as climate change plays havoc with northern communities, Kashechewan discovered more hazards of a shortened winter: the James Bay ice road, which connects the community to other communities like

Attawapiskat and Moosonee, did not last long enough to allow for the transportation of all the fuel oil that Kashechewan needed.

In his declaration of emergency, Chief Derek Stephen wrote, "We are without fuel to operate our organizations, heat them, and we are obligated to maintain employee safety and health standards for our employees." As a result, the community was on the brink of shutting down its band office, schools, power-generation centre, health clinic and fire hall due to their inability to heat the buildings.

The declaration went on to accuse Duncan of ignoring the plight of the citizens of Kashechewan. "During a conference call with [Aboriginal Affairs] we had requested fuel to be flown into the community for our medical facility, administrative buildings and our schools – all of which were denied," said Chief Stephen.

In response, the office of the minister of Aboriginal Affairs claimed that it had already organized the delivery of extra fuel a full week prior to the declaration of emergency.

Jan O'Driscoll, spokesperson for Minister Duncan, said that 18,900 litres of fuel were delivered to Kashechewan First Nation on November 18 and 19,

four days before the state of emergency was declared.

Following the declaration of emergency, O'Driscoll was quoted by the CBC as saying, "Given the urgent nature of the situation, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) has released funds to cover the incremental cost of fuel delivery by air to address health and safety needs of the community and has released a \$700,000 emergency cheque towards building supplies for renovations to 21 housing units."

Ideally, this will help community residents deal with the blow to housing, though a quick look at Attawapiskat may remind readers that though the modular homes that AANDC sent to that community were delivered over the ice road, most of them had not yet been hooked up to infrastructure by April of this year – four months after the crisis began – and none of them were occupied.

Hopefully the fuel delivered to the community will provide the heating that Kashechewan needs to avert a serious emergency. However, the problem of housing remains a significant issue, with no apparent solution in sight.



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may be published in the Nation in the New Year.
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AFN chiefs march on Parliament

Far-reaching omnibus bill target of leaders' anger

news

by Lyle Stewart

With the federal government's controversial budget-implementation Bill C-45 set to pass through the House of Commons, hundreds of First Nations chiefs marched on Parliament December 4 to protest the lack of consultation on an array of legislation that will affect their members.

The chiefs were meeting at an annual Assembly of First Nations gathering across the Ottawa River in Gatineau, Quebec.

Inspired by Chief Wallace Fox of Saskatchewan's Onion Lake First Nation, who urged his fellow leaders to take the fight to Parliament, they marched up the Hill into the House of Commons, where security guards barred their way. Nonetheless, Fox was able to debate Natural Resources Minister Joe Oliver, who is responsible for elements of the 400-page omnibus bill that will remove hundreds of lakes and rivers from environmental review processes governing industrial development.

Outside the House, Fox told reporters that all he and his colleagues wanted was an "audience" with the government that is unilaterally imposing far-reaching changes on First Nations peoples across Canada in Bill C-45. "This is what we did today, serve notice," Fox said after he and the others were escorted out by security. "We're not going to put up with this."

Among the most controversial amendments to the bill are those to the Navigable Waters Protection Act, which will remove hundreds of lakes and streams from federal protection. The Conservatives say the changes simply eliminate red tape that held up projects along waterways under the guise that they would impede navigation. Critics say it removes environmental oversight over some of Canada's most treasured lakes and rivers.

"It's basically declaring open season on all parts of Canada, but especially on First Nation territory," said NDP MP Charlie Angus, who led the Native leaders into Parliament. "No consultation. There's a real frustration. So the desire was for some of the leaders to be able to come in and actually say, wait a minute, how come you're pushing this through, this omnibus legislation, you haven't spoken to us."

After opening the AFN meeting with a call for unity, National Chief Shawn A-in-chut Atleo said Bill C-45 is a central element "of the siege that we're under right now."

Later, on the steps of the Parliament buildings, Atleo said, "We are gathered here with a strong message, a message to our peoples, that we will stand together, we will stand united, and we will stand strong. There is a great struggle going on. We want this message heard."



Security guards scuffling with AFN delegates

Atleo had earlier called on the annual Special Chiefs Assembly to mobilize against an unprecedented federal attack on First Nations rights.

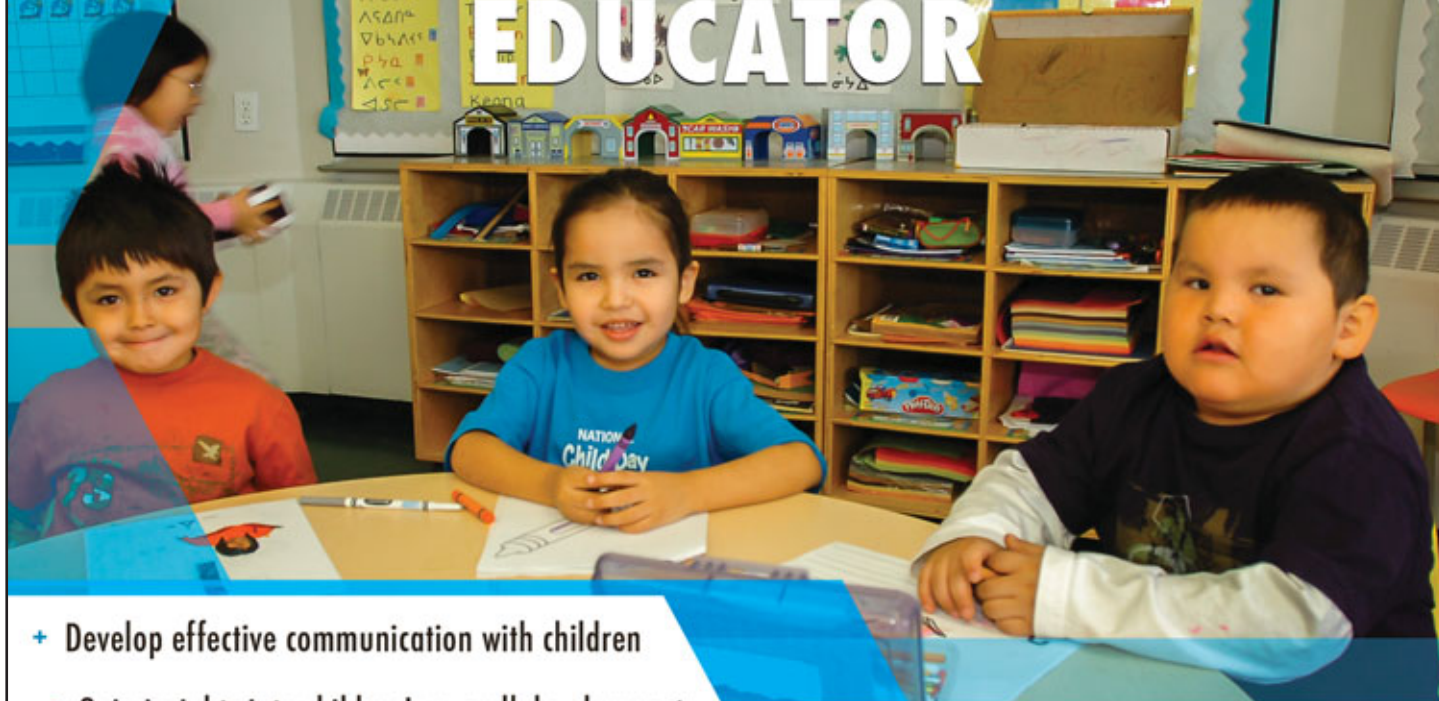
"What I hear and what I see in all of the regions is an absolute determination to push back, to remain rock solid in our rights and identity, yet there is an equally firm conviction to push forward our own solutions to address the many challenges faced by our peoples," said Atleo during his opening remarks to more than 600 Chiefs and Assembly delegates. "Together we are forever rejecting the status quo and the failures of the past that continue today. Together we have the solutions. We will not back down. We will stand firm on our rights and we will achieve change by acting now."

Last month, Atleo represented the AFN at a Senate committee examining Bill C-45.

The bill's amendments to the Navigable Waters Protection Act will remove federal oversight from most of the lakes and rivers in Canada, giving the minister of transport authority to approve projects that may affect the navigability of the 167 listed lakes, rivers and oceans. However, the minister will not need to take into account First Nations rights, title, perspectives or interests.

"Unilateral changes to important environmental legislation without discussion, engagement or consultation with First Nations is unacceptable," Atleo told the committee.

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Murder in Mistissini

Mistissini police officers discovered the body of Jason-Billy Coonishish-Rock, 22, with visible markings of a violent beating at around 9 am on November 17.

The local police handed the investigation over to the Sûreté du Québec (SQ) shortly after they arrived at the scene. For now, details surrounding this event are unclear as the police aren't releasing many details until the trial.

The police arrested Darryl Neeposh, 31, in connection with the crime the same day. The suspect was arraigned in court November 19 for second-degree murder. Neeposh is incarcerated at the Roberval prison while he awaits trial, which is set to begin December 20.

McGill study on residential schools

The impact of residential schools on the Cree has left scars that span generations. Dr. George Blacksmith's doctoral thesis examining the impact on three generations from this dark period in history has been recently published. The results of the study shed light on how things were handled as well as ways to move forward.

"The residential-school traumas continue to reverberate and generate harm throughout the Cree community," wrote Blacksmith in the abstract of the thesis. The main goal of the study was to find out how the legacy of residential schools affected the lives of the survivors, how it made a social and cultural impact, what can we learn from the experience, and

what is the role of education in the healing process.

The study focuses on survivors and their families from the Cree communities of Mistissini, Oujé-Bougoumou and Waswanipi. Stories were gathered from 34 individuals to paint a picture of the struggles that emerged from the trauma of residential schools.

The main finding from the study highlights the devastating effect on the culture of Cree youths educated in residential schools. Blacksmith's study emphasized the need to reintegrate Cree culture, history and social structure, as well as the history of residential schools and the growth of industrial development into the curriculum to ensure the wounds of the past will heal.

Rock book launched

Congratulations to *Nation* journalist Jesse Staniforth on the launch of his new book, *The Deadly Snakes: Real Rock and Roll Tonight*, published by Halifax's Invisible Publishing as part of their Bibliophonic series of short histories of Canadian bands.

The *Deadly Snakes: Real Rock and Roll Tonight* charts the rise and gentle fall of Canada's greatest band. Unwilling to bow to industry demands, the Deadly Snakes instead made records they were proud of and played music by their own rules. From their chaotic teenage beginnings to the band's exquisite final act, the story of the Deadly Snakes is both the story of angry young men growing up and a microcosm of Canadian independent music.

All the best Jesse!

Organization steps up for Indigenous women

An Ottawa-based organization is making sure to tell as many stories of Indigenous women as possible after it released a second volume of a book collection on the topic.

The release of the new collection, *Honouring Indigenous Women: Hearts of Nations Vol.2*, was produced by the Indigenous Peoples' Solidarity Movement Ottawa (IPSMO) as a part of its Honouring Indigenous Women Campaign.

The collections can be viewed for free on the organization's website (ipsmo.org) and features the unique stories from 62 women and men from different nations.

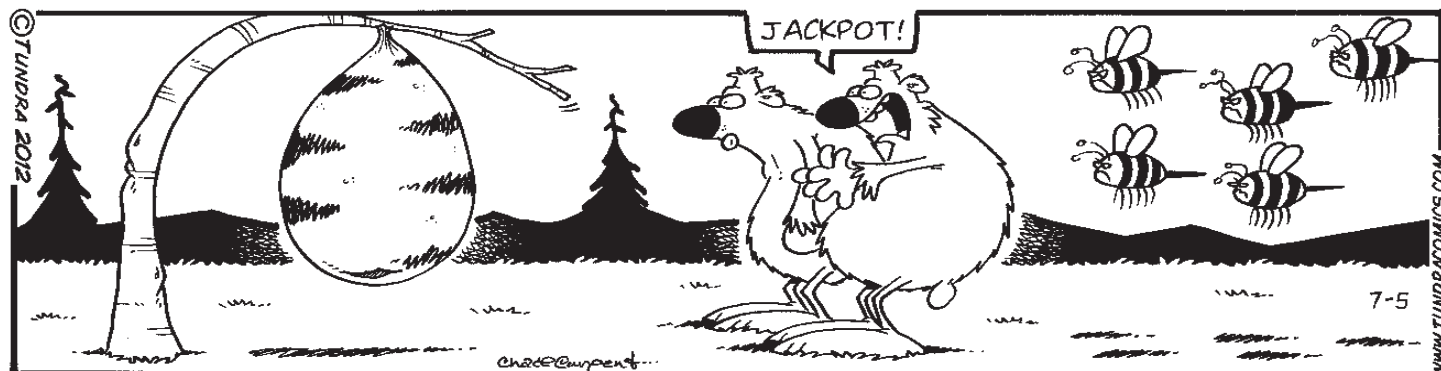
Along with the valuable knowledge the women shared with their stories, the newest volume is also meant to give Indigenous people and non-Indigenous people a chance to express themselves through writing and art.

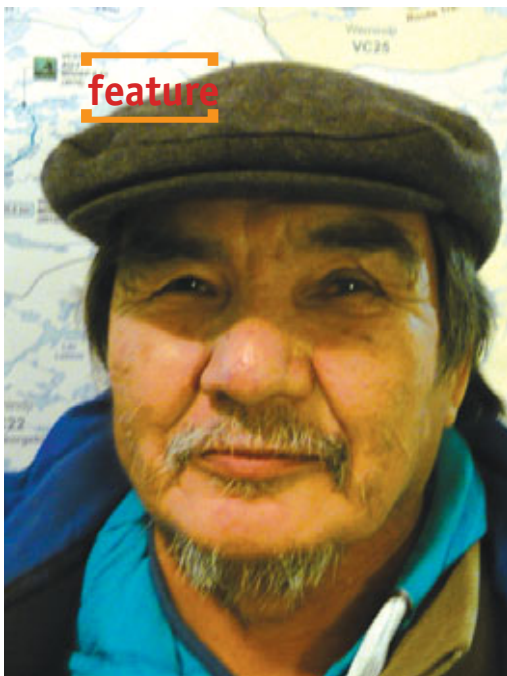
"We are very grateful for the authors and artists who courageously shared their stories with us, and are honoured to publish their work," said Pei-Ju, one of the campaign's organizers.

The launch of the collection coincided with the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women on November 25.

The book is available for purchase and the organization is still looking for more distributors and donations.

Comic strip courtesy of Tundra Comics: www.tundracomics.com





James Shashaweskum



Ernest Tomatuk and Charlie Tomatuk

Running dry

Communities speak out during COMEX public hearings about diverted rivers

Written by Jesse Staniforth Research by Eleanor Cowan Photos by Genneviève Reid

The last of six COMEX Review Committee meetings to discuss the impact of the Eastmain-1A Powerhouse and Rupert Diversion Project touched down in Waskaganish November 22, after previously visiting the five other communities most affected by those developments.

COMEX is a process for consulting with local Crees that was written into the certificate of authorization for the projects. The public hearings allow locals to express their views about the environmental and social impacts of the changes to traditional Cree waterways. Those employed by Hydro-Québec and the Société d'énergie de la Baie-James were present to respond to questions, and by all accounts, the discussion was lively in most every community.

In Wemindji, there was excited talk about the disappearing sturgeon in the area below the diversion. Given that the fish had previously fed generations of local people, the questions were heated. In particular, Rocky Georgekish and Ernest Tomatuk demanded to know what had happened to the sturgeon populations that had been relied upon to provide future nourishment for Waskaganish children.

Brian Craik, of the Grand Council of the Crees and a member of the COMEX board, later explained, "There are sturgeon in the Opinaca reservoir – quite a number of them, and they're quite flourishing. Hydro-Québec has had some hand in doing that. They've put sturgeon fingerlings into the reservoir. South of the diversion point, the river has sturgeon in it, but they don't seem to be reproducing. They seem to be land-

locked sturgeon that will probably die out over the next couple of years."

At the same time, Tomatuk complained that the high-tension wires strung through the region by Hydro-Québec were disrupting the hunting, leaving ptarmigan, beaver and rabbit uneasy and unwilling to come out to where they could be hunted.

Hydro-Québec representative Céline Belzile claimed that the high-tension wires should have no such effect. However, she admitted that the sturgeon decline was the focus of a study that would not be completed until after Christmas.

These complaints reflected those raised in the previous stops on the COMEX tour of public hearings. Notably, in Eastmain, Marjorie Weapinacappo saw the changes related to Eastmain-1 and Eastmain-1A as part of a history of decline that went back to the initial James Bay hydroelectric project in 1975.

"They say [the water is] not affected," she said in an interview. "To us, we're the ones who are presently living on the site of the dam. It's different where it's flooded now. Living where it's more dry, it's gone forever. We can no longer get our drinking water from the river since 1975, and it's getting worse since EM-1 and EM-1A. We no longer use our river as we did before. Even the floatplanes that people used to go in the bush, we have to go up to kilometre 372 for them to go to their traplines by plane. The river has a lot of sandbars. The



Emily Georgekish



The room

colour of the water is not as clear as it was, because of the decrease of the flow.”

Interviewed after the end of the COMEX hearings, Craik argued that the water that comes out of taps in Eastmain is drinkable, even if it doesn’t taste very good.

“Every community has a water-treatment plant, but as a result, a lot of the water has a chlorine taste,” Craik explained. “The only way to get that out is to put carbon filters on the houses for drinking water. Many times I’ve had tea made with clear river water. It tastes great. But you also run the risk, when you get your own water, of contaminating your water. Basically that’s what happened to communities in the past. In the early

“IT’S PRETTY SIMPLE. WHAT HAPPENS IS, EELGRASS GONE, GEESE GONE, CREES GONE.”

In the 1980s, they had gastroenteritis, especially in the communities with no infrastructure. If you walked down to the river in Waskaganish in 1980, you ran the risk of contaminating the water you drew out of the river.”

Whether or not the water is technically safe to drink, Weapinacappo doesn’t trust it.

“They treated the water, but it’s different now,” she said. “All the water that’s been treated, our pots and pans turn black. Before they were always clean because we had clear water. That was before 1975, before the river was dammed.

They say it’s not going to affect that much, but looking at it now, we have to go to [kilometre] 381 to get our drinking water, because over there the water’s more usable, for tea and cooking too. If we use the water from the tap here, the water turns black when it’s boiled.”

Because she’s also on the Trappers’ Committee, Weapinacappo was worried about the lack of funding to support initiatives that would give work to tallymen.

“The first time the [James Bay and Northern Quebec] Agreement was signed,” said Weapinacappo, “we had funding that was given to the tallymen to do a project like ski-doo trails – for one year. When we did that, it says there \$200 per day for the tallymen – but that thing is demolished. After the Paix des Braves, it’s no longer like that. They’re decreasing the funding that’s there for people to get something out of the work that’s going on. They make changes without consulting the people. We have 15 traplines for Eastmain. The ones along the coast, they made proposals to do slashing or cutting for the spring camps. They wanted to make flyaways for the geese. The last two years these

proposals have been rejected. They say the ones along the coast aren’t affected, so they’re not entitled to get that funding. But the damage is also along the coastal communities – the coastal traplines. They’re the ones who are refused, who no longer have the right to hunt.”

In Chisasibi, meanwhile, the concerns were different. One was that Hydro-Québec members did not stay in the community, but rather at the LG-1 installation – a choice of accommodation some in Chisasibi felt was insulting. As well, there were significant complaints about the depletion of the eelgrass along

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the James Bay coastline and in other areas. According to George Lameboy, the eelgrass attracted geese and other kinds of migratory waterfowl to the area, yet since the Eastmain projects have begun operations, reducing the salinity in the water, the eelgrass has begun to die out, and the geese have stopped coming.

“It’s pretty simple,” said Lameboy. “What happens is, eelgrass gone, geese gone, Crees gone.”

Lameboy cited Hydro-Québec’s duty to monitor the eelgrass beds, a job he feels they’ve failed to do properly. Armed with an impressive collection of statistics, Lameboy builds his case carefully, noting that the number of geese harvested in Chisasibi (then Fort George) in 1972 represented nearly half of all geese hunted in Eeyou Istchee, and pointing out that the geese harvested in Chisasibi, Wemindji (then Paint Hills), and Eastmain that year represented as many pounds of food to those communities as all other edible food combined.

It is the decline in eelgrass, Lameboy believes, that has led to the decline in the geese.

“When these people turn around and say Canada geese do not feed on eelgrass,” he said, “we take this matter very seriously. When Hydro-Québec says [the eelgrass decline is due to] wasting disease, we scratched our head and went back to the old folk. We asked them if they remember their father talking about eelgrass disappearing in the 1930s and 1940s. Up till now, we have no memory of that among the Crees. We have stories and accounts about how the Crees used to snare migratory birds before they had firearms, but we have no stories of eelgrass disappearing. We would have noticed, because the migratory birds would have disappeared.”

Lameboy continued, “There is quite an amount of research available that says low-salinity and wasting disease don’t go hand in hand. The other part Hydro-Québec has been saying is global warming. But it has to be a slow process – why would it suddenly attack eelgrass beds when the hydro project is in place. There’s eelgrass beds north and south of Chisasibi – they seem to be doing fine. Does the sun somehow mysteriously shine only on the Chisasibi coastline?”

Few in the crowd at the Chisasibi hearing seemed to be comfortable with Hydro-Québec’s estimation that geese do not eat eelgrass – based on research by a non-Cree scientist from the south who did not hunt geese and had not apparently spent the kind of committed time with the birds as do Cree hunters.

Craik was shocked. “When I was at the hearings in Chisasibi, I asked them to raise their hands if they thought geese ate eelgrass. I’ve seen it myself, where the geese are eating the grass that’s right by there in the water. Do they only rely on eelgrass? They probably rely on other things, not just eelgrass. But I believe that they eat eelgrass. Somebody who comes in and says they don’t eat eelgrass, I’m surprised. I don’t think that the people are lying when they say they’ve seen it. One of the things I learned is people who live on the land have fantastically detailed knowledge of that land and the resources on it. Any company like Hydro-Québec coming in and making big changes like they’ve made is going to run into the fact that



James Shashaweskum



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Rocky Georgekish

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people are very observant.”

At the bottom of every concern about the rivers affected by hydroelectric installations, there is the worry that these changes will affect the traditional course of Cree life as it has been lived.

“One time [an Elder] said, ‘There’s geese in Ottawa,’” said Lameboy. “‘Why don’t we go hunting in Ottawa?’ Are we supposed to pass on the traditional knowledge of hunting in downtown Ottawa? When you’re passing on that knowledge, like how to drive in high seas with an outboard motor, how to read the clouds, the tides, the waves? That information cannot be passed down to the next generation in downtown Ottawa. It’s nice to go hunting in a farmer’s field, but you’ll never be a skilled driver of an outboard motor. You’ll never have the skill to survive out on the bay.”

Craik said, “Over the next 100 years – maybe forever – people will be raising issues, if people continue to use the river and consider it their river. If they’re considering these things as theirs, continuing with whatever they devise as the traditional way of life – which didn’t used to include snowmobiles, outboard motors, generators, pick-up trucks, even metal – that’s a good thing. Over the years, the Crees have been very good at creating and re-creating what’s called the Cree Way of Life. I expect they’ll do that for foreseeable future.”

But Weapinacappo does not share Craik’s optimism, particularly if Hydro-Québec is involved.

“They say they’re listening, but it’s totally the opposite for us. What they’ve been promising to our parents and grandparents hasn’t turned out. I guess they know [what the problems are]. Every time they do their consultation, they’re always informed from community members. Nothing’s going to be okay, because the river has been damaged. We’re no longer getting the clear water we used to. What’s gone is gone. We’re the ones facing that every day. Hydro-Québec doesn’t seem to care. [They] only come in when they have their consultation. I guess we’ll have to adopt one of them for one year and have him live here so he can understand and believe what we’re talking about.”

Weapinacappo continued, “Every parent is responsible to take care of their children. That’s what the agreement repre-



Review committee

sents: they adopted us, so they have to take care of us. They damaged our river and they make profit off that river every day, but they keep saying there’s no funding.”

Reached in Montreal, representatives for Hydro-Québec were unwilling to respond to the issues in this story in detail.

Belzile, who was present for the COMEX hearings, said, “At this moment I can’t comment, because it’s the responsibility of COMEX to respond to these complaints. Hydro-Québec

“ONE TIME [AN ELDER] SAID, ‘THERE’S GEESE IN OTTAWA,
WHY DON’T WE GO HUNTING IN OTTAWA?’”

was asked to be there and answer questions as needed, but it’s their consultation. I don’t know how they will respond.”

Gary Sutherland, a media-relations specialist for Hydro-Québec, added, “Out of respect for COMEX, which is still finishing its report on the consultations, Hydro-Québec will not be commenting on specific issues. However, it is important to highlight that Hydro-Québec will continue to be present in the region to ensure the environmental follow-up studies on the Eastmain-1A/Sarcelle projects until 2023, and will continue to participate with Cree representatives in the joint committees that are associated with that project.”



James Shashaweskum and Genevieve Reid

Photo: Eleanor Cowan

EEYOU ISTCHEE. 3 A.M.

WOW, THAT
WAS A FUN
PARTY!

YEAH, BUT I
THINK I DRANK
TOO MUCH (HIC)

GIMME THE
KEYS... I FEEL
LIKE DRIVING!

NO WAY! I DIDN'T
DRINK - I'LL
DRIVE!

YOU KNOW
WHAT THEY
SAY...

FRIENDS DON'T
LET FRIENDS DRINK
AND DRIVE!

(HIC) WAKE ME
UP WHEN WE GET
THERE...

ILLUSTRATION: STEPHANIE LEWERT



Conseil Crie de la santé et des services sociaux de la Baie James
Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay

**The Cree Health Board wishes you
a safe and happy holiday season!**



Red red wine

Montreal's annual wine and spirits show offered lots of new taste sensations

by Lisa M. Roth

An old saying that rings true during the holiday season is a loaf of bread, a jug of wine and thou. It is sharing of food, drink and the company of a loved one or ones. It can include family and friends around you. In any case, it's about social drinking rather than the Wastrel Christmas where you stumble around making impromptu decorations on snow banks with a technicolour yawn. But no matter how you celebrate the holidays make sure it's done safely both for you and others.

Between November 8 and 10, the Palais des congrès played host for a second consecutive year to the wine and spirits event, La Grande Dégustation de Montréal. Co-presented by the Société des alcools du Québec (SAQ) and the Association québécoise des agences de vins, bières et spiritueux (AQAVBS), this glass-swirling occasion was an opportunity for the public to meet winemakers, distillers and brewers, and

to taste more than 1200 wine, beer and spirit products from around the world.

Nation editor-in-chief Will Nicholls and I set out to once again hobnob with fellow oenophiles, and meander and twirl through an immense yet strangely intimate conference hall to discover new wines.

This year the spotlight was on Portugal, Cabernet Sauvignon and the rums of the world. A daunting event if you enjoy all three. I decided to focus on a few Portuguese reds, which are becoming very popular in Quebec.

So with glass in one hand and notepad in the other, I navigated through the maze of tables and people, seeking out some passionate stories about wine. This is how I landed at a table in the Douro wine section.

Douro

The Douro is the oldest established wine-producing region in the world, originally known for Porto, and now,

more and more, for award-winning non-fortified wines. The Douro is a mountainous region in northeastern Portugal. Its slopes and valleys were carved first by the Douro River, then molded and decorated for centuries by the hands of wine cultivators.

The first stop with my fresh tasting glass was Niepoort from the Douro region. My host at this table was Frederic Blais, a wine-passionate Québécois who has an affinity towards Douro wines. So much so, that the Portuguese producer asked him to represent the winery at this event. "People know that I know Niepoort better than anybody in Quebec," Blais said.

Now in his 30s, Blais' passion for the Douro started when he was 16 and he discovered port at a family event. When he was 18 his brother gave him his first bottle and that's where the obsession began with collecting port, to the point where he was taking money from his scholarship fund to quench his hobby.



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year 2013!!

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*Happy Holidays and
best wishes for the New Year.*

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RAM

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Today, Blais is a business analyst for an engineering firm, who stated, “I’m someone who really likes to dig deep and explore.” He has made several visits to Portugal to combine vacation and research for his hobby. He lived and experienced the Douro wines and the region to its fullest – even helping out with the harvests. Blais is a true aficionado.

Niepoort Redoma 2008
(SAQ \$44.95)

On with the tasting: Blais poured the Redoma, which has a young colour – purplish on the edge with a deep ruby on the centre. We swirled and dipped our noses into our glasses. Fresh, balanced and fruity, this wine has hints of dark cherry, raspberry jam, plum, and – I’m not sure if I’m imagining this or not – a slight roasted coffee smell, apparently from the oak barrels. Now, we taste. It has a velvety attack with a spicy complexity, and builds up to finish on a cherry-licorice note. It’s fresh taste with dark cherry fruit, good acidity, a nice finesse. Superb.

Blais tells me that this wine goes well with game meats, although I’m not sure he’s ever tried caribou or moose. “It’s a very wild wine that expresses the wildness of the Douro,” an isolated region with extreme weather; cold in the winter, and very hot and dry in the summers. A wild wine, he said, is a wine that is not as polished as some of the New World wines, ones that may have been created in a laboratory in California. “You really feel the tannins, and flavours emerge that you don’t feel from wines of other places. It’s very typical, almost native, I would say,” said Blais.

Next, we sampled a red **Niepoort Vertente 2009** (SAQ \$23.60)

Deep in colour, pure, fresh, fruity, vibrant, with nice dark cherry and berry fruit, and a bit of spice. Hints of oak, with good acidity. The Vertente is notch down from the Redoma. Less complex, yet it still has the wild character and is a very good value for the price.

What is the attraction to the Douro region and its wines for Blais? “I like wines that are fresh and authentic, and you can definitely find that in the Douro, not only with Niepoort but with other producers too.”



Alentajo

Next, I travelled down the alleyways to the Alentajo section of wines from Portugal.

Alentajo is located in the south-central region of Portugal, separated from the rest of the country by the Tagus River. In the past it was known predominantly as a white wine-growing region. But a couple of foreigners moved in and changed all that.

Anna Jorgensen, daughter of the vineyard owners and the representative at the Cortes De Cima winery’s table, invited me to savour some of their wines while she gave me a little history of the family business.

Her parents had no background in winemaking before they moved to Portugal in the 1980s. Her mother, an American, has an economics degree and her Danish father is an engineer by trade. They met in Malaysia where they decided to buy a sailboat and find a place to settle down. “It ended up being Portugal, and it just happened to be wines... it just happened!” (I didn’t ask how long it took them to get to Portugal.)

The Jorgensens are especially fond and proud of their Syrahs. When they first arrived in Portugal, there were no red wines of the Syrah grape variety being produced. With the help of some culturalists from Australia they realized

that the region was ideal to grow this type of grape.

They introduced the syrah to the region even though it was technically illegal – the wine certification rules did not recognize it as a traditional Portuguese variety so the philosophy was that they shouldn’t be able to bottle it. They grew it and bottled it on the sly anyway, but because they weren’t allowed to call it a Syrah, they labelled it Incognito.

Later on, the fame and success of Incognito forced the Portuguese wine certification rules to change. Now in Portugal, a Syrah is a Syrah legally, but in exceptional quality growing years, Cortes de Cima still produces a special vintage of Incognito. Qué syrah, syrah! I was fortunate enough to taste both.

Cortes de Cima Incognito 2009
(SAQ \$56.75)

Wow! Intense ruby colour, dark red fruits, a gamey nuance to it. It’s complex, elegant and has a long finish. A great wine to accompany game, especially wild fowl – partridge, goose or ptarmigan. I can taste why it is the icon wine for this producer – by far my favourite.

Cortes de Cima Syrah 2010
(SAQ \$23.80)

Also an intense red colour, the nose is more red berry, raspberry, a hint of vanilla and tobacco. Elegant and well-balanced, it is in keeping with the great value-for-price of Portuguese wines that are available in Quebec.

I also tasted a couple of other fine samples from this winery, in the lower price range.

Cortes de Cima 2009
(SAQ \$20.55)

A blend of mostly tempranillo and syrah varieties, aged for 12 months in oak barrels. Full-bodied, ripe berry fruits, solid tannins and a touch of spicy oak.

Cortes de Cima Chaminé 2011
(SAQ \$14.55)

This red is the flagship wine for this producer, very popular and very good value for the money. It is described as juicy, ripe, easy drinking wine. It is also spicy, earthy and well-structured.

It’s time to break from the crowds, and we steer towards the pressroom, an oasis at the end of the rows and rows of

Nous profitons de ce temps de l'année pour vous souhaiter des jours heureux au milieu de ceux qui vous sont chers. Joyeuses Fêtes!

At this time of year, we would like to wish you joyous times with those you hold dear. Happy Holidays!

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Discover another side of the Eastmain-1-A/Sarcelle/Rupert project.

Go behind the scenes with Jimmy and Tommy Neeposh, William K. Gunner-Eenatuck, Josie Jimiken, Robert Coonishish, George Pisimopeo, Jérôme Gingras, Timothy Moses, Mylène Landry, Johnny Saganash and many others.

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display tables and clinking glasses. Away from the din of the event, Will and I have a chance to re-address which of the 2000 products on display we'll try next, and why.

There happened to be an elder in the pressroom doing the same. A serious old-school oenophile (wine lover) who has been writing about wines for decades. Roger Huet readjusts his tie as he contemplates my question: what should I try here next? He pauses and then says, "Ah, un vin de gourmandise." With those curious words, off we fly back into the hall to taste a gourmet wine lover's wine.

Beaune Clos des Mouches Grand Cru 2009 – Joseph Drouhin (SAQ \$104.50)

I was curious to discover why there is such a buzz about this French wine, named "Clos des mouches" because of the honeybees frequenting this vineyard. We're tasting this wine in its youth. It is a deep, but clear ruby Pinot Noir, with notes of cherry, raspberry, blackberry, and there is something flowery about it too. You want to attach the glass to your nose for a couple of hours and just treat the olfactory senses. It's intense, and fresh, yet soft on the palate – it will be velvety and rounder with age. This is a wine to keep in a cellar for up to 40 years. At my age, I'm better off drinking it a couple of decades sooner. Huet was right: this is a great wine and a great opportunity to discover classic Beaune Burgundies.

On my way out I stopped at the Alco Prévention Canada booth. The president of the company, Ronald Chartrand, handed me a straw to blow in the breathalyzing machine. These are alcohol detector machines that are rented out to corporate events and parties so that people can test their alcohol level at any time during the event, especially before getting into a car. "We are in the business of prevention. We are here to educate people to know their limit. After a half a bottle of wine or two beers, who knows what alcohol level you're at?" They also sell Alcotubes, one-shot breathalyzer testers that anyone can buy for about \$5 at pharmacies and the SAQ.

It's the end of the day and even though I was not going to be driving, I was curious to know what my alcohol level is after sipping all that wine. As I placed a plastic straw in my mouth and approached the machine, the heckling started from the crowd gathered around me. "Blow for a good cause!" and other remarks that would not be appropriate to include in a family magazine.

I blew, and I blew. It didn't work. "You have to blow harder and steadily for about seven seconds, like you're blowing a balloon." I tried again, with success. The machine read 0.029. I was five points under the legal limit of 0.08. I could have brought my car, but I really didn't feel like I should be driving. Chartrand explained that even if you have to consider the fact that after you stop drinking your alcohol level can go up in the next hour. So if you're at 0.07 and get stopped by police shortly after, you could be at 0.08 and in trouble. For me, a safe level to gauge whether or not I can drive is under 0.05.

I asked Chartrand if his background was in law enforcement. "No, I am the president of this company. My father got



**Streeter: Patrick
(no last name)**

How would you compare this to other beers you have drunk?

They are really good. First, because they are a Quebec beer and my favourite is the Scotch beer because it tastes really good. That's the second reason because they have more taste than Budweiser or Blue.

Which one would you have with friends watching a hockey game?

The Bock. It's a really good beer.

Which one would you drink if your girlfriend broke up with you?

The double Bock because it's 9%.

And which one if you were at a stag party?

The White one because it's smoother.

And now you know the reason why I don't do streeters that often. The beers being rated were from Micro-Brasserie L'Alchimiste.

by Will Nicholls

killed in a car accident and I was involved. That's why I started this business 25 years ago. We are about prevention and saving lives." A sobering note to end the event on.

I reflected on the last two days of wandering around in a vast conference hall with a glass in my hand. I never even got to the whites or the rums, yet I discovered as much about savouring vintages as I did about savouring the moments with people who share their stories. And that's what drinking wine is all about.



Holiday flavours to savour

The Nation's annual guide to tasty holiday entertaining

by Amy German

As Eeyou Istchee is blanketed by the first snowfalls of the season, so too comes the time of year to bask in the lovely glow of the Christmas tree with loved ones – old and young – while enjoying some delectable seasonal delicacies.

Whether you are looking to make some festive treats to enjoy while watching holiday specials with the little ones, fun little nibbles for everyone at a holiday gathering, sensations to sip or a dish to beef up your holiday fare, *the Nation* once again is happy to present our holiday entertaining guide.

Meaty Morsels

If you want a surefire hit for your holiday party that will quickly disappear, try the following cocktail meatballs from food.com.

Tangy Cocktail Meatballs

- 2 eggs
- 2 cups quick oats
- 1 (12-ounce) can evaporated milk
- 1 cup minced onion
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 3 lbs lean ground beef or wild meat

Sauce

- 2 cups ketchup
- 1 1/2 cups packed brown sugar
- 1/2 cup minced onion
- 1 teaspoon liquid smoke
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/8 teaspoon ground cloves

Directions:

- 1) In large bowl, beat the eggs.
- 2) Add all remaining ingredients and mix well.
- 3) Shape into 1-1/2-inch balls.
- 4) Place on two 13-x-9 baking pans.



- 5) Bake, uncovered, at 375°F for 30 minutes.
- 6) Drain; place all meatballs on one pan.
- 7) In saucepan, bring all sauce ingredients to a boil.
- 8) Pour over meatballs.
- 9) Bake, uncovered for another 20 minutes.

Read more at:

www.food.com/recipe/tangy-cocktail-meatballs-41690?oc=linkback

Christmas Cocktail Meatballs

These tangy, savoury meatballs are like a preview to Christmas dinner while also being a party in your mouth so they are the perfect seasonal treat.

For the meat part

- Equal parts ground turkey and ground bulk sausage meat totaling two pounds
- 1/2 a cup of breadcrumbs
- 1/3 cup of grated onion
- 1/4 of fresh minced parsley
- 1 egg
- 1/2 teaspoon of ground sage
- 1/2 teaspoon of ground savory
- 1/2 teaspoon of thyme
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 can of cranberry of jellied cranberry sauce
- 1/4 cup of hickory (smoky) or chipotle BBQ sauce
- 2 tablespoons of freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon of soya sauce
- 1 teaspoon of grated orange zest

For meat balls

- 1) Mix all ingredients in a large mixing bowl.

- 2) Form into bite-sized meatballs (about 45 little balls).
- 3) Place on a greased baking sheet.
- 4) Bake at 400°F for 15 minutes.
- 5) Stir halfway through to brown on all sides.

For sauce

- 1) In a large saucepan or pot cook all remaining ingredients until your sauce starts bubbling and cranberry jelly is liquefied and bubbly (about five minutes).
- 2) Throw in meatballs and simmer for five minutes, rolling them around carefully until they are all coated.
- 3) Serve hot with toothpicks.

Holiday Devilled Eggs

Eggs are usually more synonymous with Easter than Christmas, but that doesn't mean that this party favourite can't be done up festively for your holiday happening.

- 12 hard-boiled eggs
- 6 tablespoons mayonnaise
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped red bell pepper
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped green onion
- 2 teaspoons yellow mustard
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

- 1) Slice eggs in half lengthwise, separating the yolks from the whites.
- 2) Put yolks into a bowl with remaining ingredients and mix.
- 3) Fill egg whites with egg yolk mixture, heaping lightly or pipe in using a pastry bag for a fancy effect.

tous ses vœux

*All our best wishes of solidarity
in the New Year,*

[illegible]

*Merry x-mas to all of
our current and future clients.*

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Holiday Beverages for your festive event

If you are looking to go with a red and green theme for your cocktails at the holiday party, look no further than these fun and festive drinks.

Midori punch (green)

1 ounce of Midori melon liqueur
1/2 ounce of vodka

2 ounces of regular grapefruit juice (you can't use ruby if you want the colour effect)

2 ounces of lemon soda (7Up)

Balled melon (honey dew) for garnish

- 1) In a tall glass, add ice and then the other ingredients in order.
- 2) Garnish with balled melon in the drink.

Raspberry Cooler

3 ounces of sparkly raspberry soda and extra for ice cubes

1 bag of frozen raspberries or fresh raspberries if you can access them

1 1/2 ounces of vodka per cocktail

- 1) Pour raspberry soda into an ice-cube tray, adding one raspberry per cube for a garnish and to keep the drinks flavourful.
- 2) Puree raspberries.
- 3) To assemble the raspberry cooler, place 2-3 raspberries into a tall glass, add vodka, one ounce of puree and then an additional three ounces of raspberry soda.

Sweet Treats

Strawberry Santas

If you can get your hands on firm and fresh strawberries at this time of year, these incredibly cute strawberry and cream cheese icing Santa Claus treats are actually pretty healthy for a sweet treat and make a wonderful snack for the little ones.

10 large strawberries

200g (1 package) cream cheese

2 tsp sieved icing sugar (or to taste)

1 tsp pure vanilla extract

Poppy seeds or chopped raisin bits (or whatever else like sprinkles or candies).

- 1) Rinse the strawberries and cut around the top of the strawberry.
- 2) Remove the pointed bottom and dig out some inside of the strawberry with a paring knife. Keep these bottoms as they become Santa's hat
- 3) Add the cream cheese, icing sugar and vanilla extract into a mixing bowl and beat until creamy.
- 4) Add the cream cheese mix to a piping bag with the corner snipped off. To make the Santa face, add the mixture to the top of the base of the strawberry. Then add two small buttons to the front.
- 5) Add a small amount of the mixture to the top of the strawberry and place the tops of the strawberries back on. Decorate them with poppy seeds as eyes. (We suggested raisin bits or sprinkles in case you are making these for a child's class or daycare as there are allergy warnings against poppy seeds.)

This recipe was adapted from the following link:

www.channel4.com/4food/recipes/tv-show-recipes/sunday-brunch-recipes/strawberry-santas-recipe

Speculaas (a Danish cookie)

What is Christmas without a little spice? My mother, who is an incredible baker, has just added these delightful spice cookies to our family's repertoire of Christmas goodies and swears by them, so we thought we would share them with you.

1/2 cup unsalted butter, softened

1 cup packed brown sugar

1 egg

1 cup whole wheat flour

3/4 cup all-purpose flour

2 tsp cinnamon

2 tsp ground ginger

1/2 tsp baking soda

1/4 tsp ground cardamom

1/4 tsp ground cloves

1/4 tsp ground nutmeg

1/4 tsp salt

1/4 tsp pepper

1 tbsp milk

1/2 cup of sliced almonds



- 1) In large bowl, beat butter with sugar until light and fluffy; beat in egg.
- 2) In separate bowl, whisk together whole-wheat flour, all-purpose flour, cinnamon, ginger, baking soda, cardamom, cloves, nutmeg, salt and pepper. Stir into butter mixture until just combined.
- 3) Turn out onto lightly floured surface; gather dough and knead until smooth. Divide in half and form into rectangles. Wrap each and refrigerate for 30 minutes.
- 4) On lightly floured surface, roll out each rectangle to scant 1/4-inch (5 mm) thickness. Cut into 3- x 1 1/2-inch (8-x-4 cm) rectangles.
- 5) Place, one inch (2.5 cm) apart, on parchment paper-lined baking sheets. Brush with milk; lightly press almonds onto tops.
- 6) Bake in 350°F (180°C) oven until edges are darkened and tops are firm, about 13 minutes.

Adapted from *The Canadian Living Cookbook*



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The *Nation* is turning 20! To commemorate this historic occasion, the *Nation* is embarking on a retrospective countdown to its 20th Anniversary in November 2013. In the next 23 issues, the *Nation* flashback will feature some of the *Nation*'s stories, photos and award winning coverage throughout the years, which will be compiled in a 20th collector's edition issue. This *Nation* flashback is made possible by the generosity of **CREECO**.

NEWS

SEPTEMBER 13, 1996

HYDRO HERBICIDES ARE UNSAFE, SAY EXPERTS

Hydro-Quebec is reassuring Crees that herbicides it sprayed along Route 113 aren't dangerous to people or animals.

But experts and environmentalists contacted by *The Nation* say the herbicide used is highly toxic and flammable, and can kill fish, animals and people if exposed in large enough doses. In smaller doses, it can cause birth defects, tumours, reproductive damage, and eye and skin irritation.

Hydro workers sprayed the herbicide Garlon, a formulation of Triclopyr, along a 114-kilometre stretch of road between Lebel-sur-Quévillon and Desmairville to kill pesky shrubs growing under its power line.

Worried trappers in the area reported plantlife changing to a sickly brown colour and wondered if it was still safe to pick blueberries and set rabbit-snares. One trapper said the spraying was done right in front of his cabin.

Everywhere else in Northern Quebec where the spraying was done, Hydro asked local municipalities for their permission before going ahead. Hydro spokesman Michel Defossé said no Cree community was asked for its permission because the spraying was not done on Category I land. He said it stopped 1 km outside the Category I land of Waswanipi. Permission to spray in Category II and III land was given by the James Bay Municipality.

The town of Belcourt, near Senneterre, was the only municipality which refused to grant Hydro permission to spray. A Belcourt official told *The Nation* Hydro has the manpower to remove shrubs manually and does not need to spray. Local farmers were against the spraying, she said.

Hydro herbicides specialist Stephane Chapdelaine said Garlon kills plants by making

them grow faster and in a disorderly way. He claimed that Crees have no reason to worry. "No, it's not dangerous for animals," he said, but added: "We counsel people not to eat blueberries in the week following the spraying. It's not dangerous, but like all chemicals of this kind it's better not to have them in your system."

But according to the Pesticide Action Network, based in San Francisco, Garlon is a hazardous chemical which can harm animals and people.

Drinking 38 grams will kill a human adult, and smaller doses will kill trout, salmon and mammals, says the network. Contact with eyes can lead to eye irritation and even blindness in extreme cases. Skin contact can lead to moderate irritation and even a burn. Breathing it can lead to nausea. The herbicide, which is flammable because it contains kerosene and diesel oil, can remain in conifer needles for a year.

A U.S. government report obtained by *The Nation* says this herbicide can remain present in the soil for one to six months and can contaminate groundwater. One crew which sprayed the herbicide along forestry roads reported "frequent headaches," according to the report.

Hydro-Quebec, forestry companies and railways use herbicides to control plant growth on their properties across Quebec. But the practice has sparked a lot of protest.

Margret Grenier, an environmentalist in the Gaspé region, has been fighting Hydro herbicide spraying for 12 years. "They know very well it's toxic," she said, adding that she thinks herbicides are to blame for the Gaspé having one of the highest cancer rates in Quebec. "Don't touch anything. Stay away," she warns Crees. "It's all been poisoned."

by Alex Roslin



Volume 3, No. 21

UPDATE 2012 ON HYDRO HERBICIDES

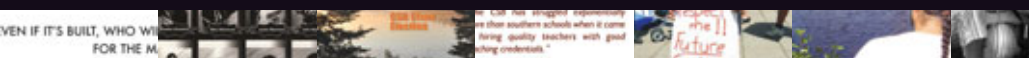
Over the past 20 years, pressure on companies in Eeyou Istchee to be accountable for the dangerous chemical herbicides they use has led to change.

Thanks to grass-roots initiatives and coverage by the local media, dangerous defoliants such as Triclopyr are no longer employed. But Mother Nature is quite the fighter and in order to manage unwanted vegetation, Hydro-Québec has adopted a multi-pronged approach, combining herbicides with mechanical vegetation management.

Although these herbicides were approved by Environment Canada, there is still much debate in the international scientific community regarding their effects on health and the environment.

—Akiva Levitas

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We are the world

Cree youth participate in We Day in Montreal

by Akiva Levitas

It was a beautiful Sunday afternoon when 90 Cree students – 10 from each of the nine communities of Eeyou Istchee – arrived at Olympic Stadium in Montreal to enjoy the CFL Eastern final game between the Montreal Alouettes and the Toronto Argonauts.

The kids came to Montreal November 18 and stayed until November 20 when the international We Day gathering was held at the Théâtre St-Denis. The Cree School Board as well as the Cree Justice Department sponsored the trip, while the Cree Health Board paid for the football tickets.

An initiative of Free the Children, We Day is an international educational movement whose main goal is to inspire the next generation to get engaged in the

world around them and to make an impact. The organization brings together students from all over Canada to We Day events hosted in major cities.

Craig Kielburger, founder of Free the Children, said, “In the past school year alone, young people have raised \$6 million to support local and international causes, and volunteered a total of 1.7 million hours. It’s remarkable what we can accomplish when we come together to make a change. I can’t wait to see what the Quebec youth can do this school year.”

The blaring vuvuzelas and massive crowds raised an excitement in the kids, many of whom were visiting Montreal for the first time. As each class arrived at the stadium the smiles and excitement

were visible on all the students’ faces as they made their way to their seats.

The students joined in with the crowd chanting for the home team Alouettes who, after leading through most of the first half of the game, fell flat on several missed plays and interceptions to eventually lose to the Argonauts. But it was an experience these students will never forget.

The comments from the students after the game were it was “fun to watch” and it “could have gone better”. The mad dash following the game to exit the stadium was quite the experience with 50,000 fans rushing into the métro station all at once. The students made their way back to their hotels to rest up for the next two days of events leading up to We Day.



From me, to we, to Cree

Cree youth descends on Montreal for two days of positive messages

by Jesse Staniforth

The week of We Day, Montreal, brought a whirlwind tour for a delegation of students from communities across the Eeyou Istchee.

On Sunday, November 18, the group of 90 students arrived for a busy 48 hours in the big city, kicking their stay off with the CFL Eastern final game between the Montreal Alouettes and the Toronto Argonauts that would decide which team would advance to the Grey Cup. Unfortunately the home team lost.

The next morning, the students, along with their teachers and chaperones, filled a theatre at the former Forum – now a movie multiplex – to see a special screening of *The Last Gladiators*, the documentary about the effects of the life of a hockey enforcer on former Montreal Canadiens right-wing Chris “Knuckles” Nilan.

It’s well-known the Habs are second in popularity to hunting in the Eeyou Istchee – most folks will find a couple of hours out of even the busiest schedule to watch a Habs game. But the movie screening wasn’t so much about hockey as it was an opportunity to talk to the kids about bullying and harassment. After the film, Nilan appeared and spoke to the kids about the effects of bullying on his life. Anyone who’s followed the former Hab knows that he has had his share of difficulties. Like a lot of former hockey

goons, he has struggled with emotional problems that, in his case, led to severe addiction along with other forms of self-destruction.

Nilan is a legendary fighter, holding the record of the greatest average number of penalty minutes per game, as well as the record for the most penalties in a single game. On the ice, he played first and foremost with his fists. But his message for the young people of Eeyou Istchee was that exciting as it may look, the path of a goon is a dark road to travel.

Bullying sounds to a lot of people like the ugly side of child’s play – bad behaviour, but nothing serious in the long run. Speaking to the Cree youth delegation, Nilan said that though he’s had 30 operations to fix his body, and all those have healed, it’s the things that people have said that have truly damaged him. He takes issue with the old saying that sticks and stones may break bones, but words can never hurt you – words, says Nilan, can hurt in a way that even a beating from the toughest thugs in the NHL never will. A beating can bruise your body and hurt your pride, but the kind of long-term tormenting that gets called bullying can ruin your life forever, going so far as to drive some young people to suicide. Even harassment over the internet, via Twitter or Facebook, Nilan cau-



Nadine St Louis

tioned, is vicious and can leave its victims damaged for years.

Speaking after Nilan, former Argonaut Chuck Winters took the stage. Since losing his brother to a drive-by shooting in 1998, Winters has become an advocate for conflict resolution in communities, working with Stop The Violence and Last Play Training, which uses sports to provide kids the lessons in discipline and self-control they need to





Joey Shaw

improving the standard of living for young people worldwide.

CRA Department of Justice and Correctional Services Director Donald Nicholls underlined that when approaching the Cree School Board for students to recommend, the Department of Justice and the Public Health Department underlined that they didn't want the trip to be open only to straight-A students.

"We wanted a cross-section of students from every community," said Nicholls. "We wanted the school principals to recommend some kids who are struggling to get by, some kids who are doing well, and some kids who are in between. This sort of message shouldn't just be for the kids that are doing the best in school. There's something of value in there for every young person in Eeyou Istchee."

With more than 15 performers and speakers, the day's roster was overwhelming. It included fan-favourite R&B singer Shawn Desman, Kenyan Maasai Warriors Wilson & Jackson, Lieutenant-General Romeo Dallaire, a dancer from Cirque du Soleil's One Drop, and the astonishing Spencer West, a man with no legs who climbed Mount Kilimanjaro using only his hands.

While it was Desman who most of the Cree youth seemed to be looking forward to see, it was West who left the most lasting impression with his message of "redefining the possible". Telling the story of how he followed the path made by previous climbers up the mountain, West encouraged kids who feel doubtful, sad, or helpless not to give up, returning

"THIS SORT OF MESSAGE SHOULDN'T JUST BE FOR THE KIDS THAT ARE DOING THE BEST IN SCHOOL. THERE'S SOMETHING OF VALUE IN THERE FOR EVERY YOUNG PERSON IN EEOYOU ISTCHEE."

again and again to the refrain, "There's a path. Keep going."

Speaking later, Virginia Wabanno, a resource/ remedial teacher at Waskaganish's Wiinibekuu School, said, "When I saw Spencer West, I had goose bumps. It was amazing. To do something like that, it makes an impact on the youth, to show them they can do something if they're determined to do it. I think these are very powerful messages."

Eastmain student Nancy Mayappo agreed: "Spencer was my number-one inspiration. A lot of people spoke on a lot of things, but Spencer was the inspiration to not lose hope."

Colin Esperon, a Secondary-2 student from Great Whale and a player on the Cree Nation Bears, put it even more

succeed in academics and in life. On finishing his presentation, Winters stuck around for nearly an hour, talking and taking photos with as many kids as wanted to meet him.

Early the next day came the main event: Free the Children's We Day Montreal, a day-long event promoting youth empowerment and active citizenship. Focussing on the slogan "From Me to We", We Day celebrates and promotes acts of social change and improvement both at home and away. The event encourages young people to see themselves as having the power to bring about positive change and fostering connections between youths across different countries and cultures in the name of



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“THE MESSAGE IS CLEAR: CHANGE COMES FROM PEOPLE. IT DOESN'T COME FROM LEADERSHIP OR GOVERNMENT, IT COMES FROM INDIVIDUALS. IF YOU ACT TOGETHER AND FIND WAYS TO DO THINGS TOGETHER, THAT'S HOW CHANGE HAPPENS.”

bluntly: “Spencer West – that guy was great!”

Though West was easily the most impressive speaker, the day was full of engaging figures, such as Kahnawake Mohawk and water-polo Olympian Waneek Horn-Miller, who gave a shout-out to the Cree delegation in the crowd and called on the youth in the room to help solve the human-rights issues in Canadian Aboriginal communities.

“This is not an Aboriginal issue, this is a Canadian issue,” she said. “No child in a country as wealthy as [Canada] should ever have to go hungry or cold or suffer unsafe homes and schools. We can spend billions of dollars to build an oil pipeline across some of the harshest territory in this country, but we still can't bring clean water and safe homes to our citizens.”

Local youth Candice Pollack also spoke about the need for improvements at home, speaking of the example made by the late student activist Shannen Koostachin of Attawapiskat, who didn't let being only 14 years old stand in the way of bringing attention to the desperate situation of schools in that community – long before the crisis in Attawapiskat reached its peak last December.

Deputy Grand Chief Ashley Iserhoff said, “The message is clear: change comes from people. It doesn't come from leadership or government, it comes from individuals. If you act together and find ways to do things together, that's how change happens. This is encouraging youth to take action, stop bullying, get involved in their communities, get involved regionally and internationally.”

Iserhoff's message seemed to hit home with Cree youth in attendance.

Roslyn Diamond, a Secondary-4 student from Waskaganish, said, “I guess everybody knows how to change, but I got the shivers once they were talking.” Citing the problem of bullying, she said, “[Bullies] keep pushing and pushing and they can't stop. It has to stop, right away. It's too much. Everybody has to stand up and talk about it.”

But Diamond was equally excited by the We Day message encouraging young people to travel to other countries to help out abroad.

“There's a lot of interesting places out there – like India! There are so many interesting stories there. And the language and the religion!”

Nancy Mayappo from Eastmain said, “It's great to be able to be a part of



Manon Barbeau

something as big as this. It helps you feel a lot of confidence in helping others, and helping yourself. I'd love to see a lot more kids [in Eastmain] get involved in the environment. For example, we don't really have recycling – we have it for cans, but not paper and plastic. I'd love to organize something like that. I see a lot of inspiration today, and while I was here, to be the first one to help out in the community, with environmental issues or anything. It gave me a lot of confidence.”

That message was, no doubt, precisely what the Department of Justice and the Public Health Department hoped the Cree delegation would take away from the trip.







The Disturbed Grave

Told by Elsie Duff, Chisasibi

Translated and transcribed by Brian Webb

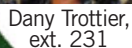
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In the past, I considered ghost stories unbelievable.
I had no concern for them since I had no belief in them whatsoever.
Recently, I began considering those stories about spirits were really true.
My late mother talked about a certain place where they camped and they would always sense a presence.
I wondered why this was happening to them; even though I had never experience this myself.
One time, we paddled our canoe. The water was totally still. No breeze at all.
My mother said, "This is the place where a spirit is heard."
I asked her who it was.
She answered, "The Blind One."
Apparently, an old woman had been buried there. My mother spoke the old woman's name.
This old woman had been buried there and a bear had dug up her grave.
I don't know how many years ago this had happened.
Her bones were scattered all around.
And when people paddled by, they could hear something.
It sounded like someone crawling down to the shore.
This was what my mother said.
This area was so beautiful. I probably have seen this area myself.
I think it was my older brother David who put her bones back into her grave.
This was probably why people felt this place to be eerie.
Because her bones were strewn about.
This is a story I've heard from my mother.

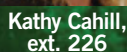


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*During this period of rejoicing,
the town of Val-d'Or would like to extend
its warmest holiday wishes
to the Cree Nation.*

***May the respect and
the collaboration that unites our
communities perpetuate in 2013.***



May the magic of Christmas touch everyone in Eeyou Itchee.

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Suicide is never painless

Dialogue for Life conference provides ways of helping each other

by Amy German

Hundreds of First Nations and Inuit individuals from all over Quebec descended on the Sheraton Hotel November 24-29 to talk about the loved and lost and how to keep from losing more loved ones.

Since 2001, the First Nations and Inuit Suicide Prevention Association of Quebec has held an annual event in Montreal at the end of November to help those who work on the frontlines as well as those who have lost a loved one to suicide.

While this event began as a simple convention to refresh frontline workers with new techniques and provide them with a safe environment to vent about their own stressors, it has evolved into much more over the years.

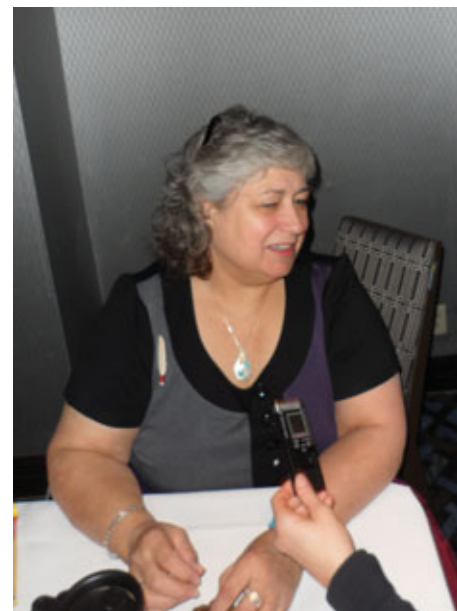
"Originally it was about providing support for frontline workers because they need support in the communities," explained executive director Thelma Nelson.

in the Obedjiwan community during the conference.

She said the news made the event more intense for the participants because everyone at the conference had already been affected by suicide in their own lives.

"There are a lot of people who are here to begin their healing process and this just made it heavier. Many are tired because they are taking in so much information and hopefully they will return to their communities and share this stuff with everyone else so that those who couldn't come have the opportunity to pick up new tools to help their families, friends, students and community members," said Nelson.

In total, Nelson said there were over 600 at this year's conference, with some coming for only the pre-conference or just the conference while others stayed for the entire six days. Throughout the



"Throughout the year, people call me just to cry and tell me that there has been another suicide in their community. There are others who call and they will talk about what is missing. So when I have an issue comes more than once, I realize that this is something we should work on," said Nelson.

In that vein, the conference is always trying add new features. This year the event added "Conference Idol" to their nightly entertainment whereby attendees were encouraged to sing karaoke, laugh and have fun in the evenings. With much of the days focussed on grieving and workshops, Nelson said that singing provided for a perfect evening's relaxation and that she even did her best Ginette Reno rendition.

According to Mike Standup, an Aboriginal healer who has worked at the event for the last seven years, the conference was once again working like a well-oiled machine. Every year he attends the event to help attendees deal with some of the emotional fall-out that can spill over after some of the workshops and grieving sessions.

"IT'S GOOD TO SEE SO MANY PEOPLE HERE, ESPECIALLY ALL OF THESE YOUNG PEOPLE. IT'S GREAT THAT THEY CAN CONNECT WITH THE OTHER FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE, LIKE THE INUIT."

"But, as we go forward and more people find out about this event, more come to Montreal for this healing. At first it was just individuals and youth, but now we are seeing whole families come to the event, especially if there's been a recent suicide. They come for something to help them in their grieving process," she added.

Nelson, who is from Kahnawake, said the three-day pre-conference followed by the three-day conference for families was incredibly busy, but that this year's event had taken on a particularly sober tone as there had been a suicide

event they celebrated this year's theme: "Celebrating our Strengths, Honouring Life."

Nelson said this theme was chosen because Quebec's Indigenous people are very strong as are the frontline workers in their communities. A lot of this event is about those workers coming together to share what works and while that something may be small, it could be just the thing that prevents another suicide.

At the same time, this conference is all about finding what works based on the needs of both the frontline workers and the families.

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Wishing everyone in Eeyou Istchee
a Safe and Happy Holiday Season



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Over the last seven years he said he has seen the event evolve a great deal.

"The sheer number of people has increased at this event, plus there has been an increase in the kinds of programs offered. In the seven years I've been here I have never gone to any of the workshops because I am always in my healing room helping people but that is how I have always worked and that is how it will always be," said Standup.

This year's conference brought Crees from many different branches of the Cree entities to work and share alongside other First Nations.

Among them was Great Whale's Ruth Mast, who was attending the event on behalf of the Department of Justice and Corrections under the Cree Regional Authority.

"In my field, I work with a lot of individuals who are going through the justice system and need information. I have a lot of one-on-one conversations with these people about how they got to where they are now and I find that some of the workshops that I have attended are helpful with this process.

"I took a workshop on complex trauma and one with Jane Middleton Moss about brain development in infancy, between the ages of 0-5. I'm also attending some workshops on bullying which I find interesting as part of the work I do is about prevention," said Mast.

Also from the same department, Steven Tapiatic spoke of how the event had added depth and understanding to his perspective.

"I have learned that grieving is a big part of life and that a lot of people need

support, even the ones who don't seem like they need it. I am here to support a friend who recently lost his brother," said Tapiatic.

Attending the event was former Grand Chief Matthew Mukash, who was there on behalf of the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay (CBHSSJB).

"It's good to see so many people here, especially all of these young people. It's great that they can connect with the other First Nations people, like the Inuit.

"This is something that our communities really need because there are a lot of things that we have had to deal with and we need to reconnect to the old ways while trying to understand where we are in life and doing something about it. If you are having problems, this is a good place to be as there are a lot of good resource people who have a lot of experience in what they do, be it suicide or family related," said Mukash.

Among the many healers presenting workshops and Elders holding healing ceremonies at the event, there were others on hand to simply present information intended on helping frontline workers and struggling families.

Corporal Jacques Th  berge from the RCMP's Drug and Organized Crime Awareness Service was there to educate those interested in learning about the current face of drug addiction.

"We have drug displays on the tables for everybody to look at. People have been coming to our table to see the different drugs and to ask questions. They want to know what these drugs are and how people are using them.

"Our displays show what these substances look like and how they can be identified. Plus we have a lot of documentation on prevention," explained Th  berge.

Dennis Windigo, a psychotherapist from Thunder Bay who has done a lot of work with the Cree through the CBHSSJB, was hired to put on workshops and healing events at the conference.

For the frontline workers he provided a three-day training on Aboriginal



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"I may tell them things like to remember them at this time and make it about their life and what they remember about them as it stimulates dialogue between family members. It also helps them to grieve and to work towards accepting the loss and to acknowledge them at this time of the year as they were a part of this season when they were around. There are usually good memories of this person and so you need to remember those things.



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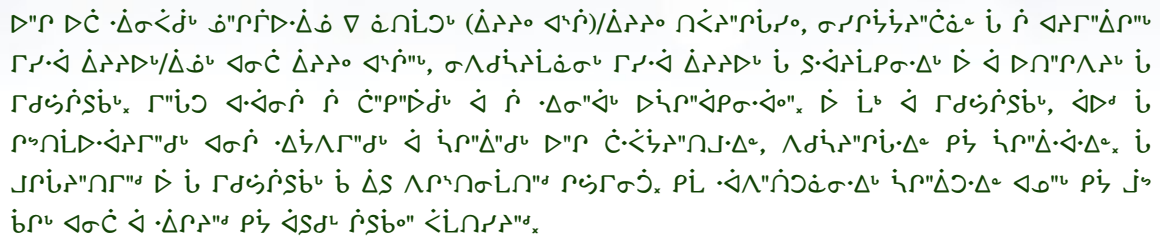
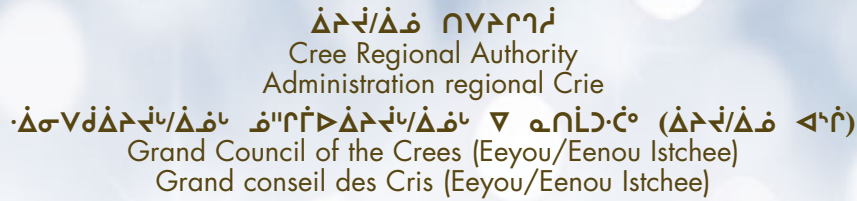
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On behalf of the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Regional Authority, it is a pleasure to address the Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee with a blessed season for the Christmas Holidays. Many have been touched by the loss of loved ones. This Christmas, we value our precious ones within our reach with faith, hope and love. Let us celebrate this Christmas Season that has been bestowed upon us by Our Creator. Let loving kindness be shared today and always in our homes and everyday lives.

From our offices to your homes, we wish you a delightful Christmas with warm-hearted celebrations. May the New Year bring cherished memories with a fresh approach towards your ambitions.

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Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come

Deputy Grand Chief Ashley Iserhoff



Summit on addictions

Crees converge to address the issue on a large scale

by Amy German

From November 19-21, Crees from various entities gathered in Val-d'Or to brainstorm ways to address one of the biggest issues in Eeyou Istchee today: addiction.

According to Sol Awashish, one of the main organizers of this year's Addictions Summit, the event was about finding new solutions.

"The idea was to come up with action plans from the input and priorities outlined by the different groups we put together throughout the Cree Nation," said Awashish.

Nine groups were created at the event consisting of some entities or departments that were paired together, like the police and the Department of Justice and Correctional Services, or representatives from organizations like the Cree Health Board and Social Services of James Bay, the Elders and the Cree School Board.

As Awashish explained, a facilitator and a note taker were provided to represent each group and then these individuals were sent around to work on a brainstorming session with each of the other groups. The end result was to produce a list of priorities and suggestions that was brought back to each group so the rest of the communities could see what was suggested by that particular group.

Awashish, who was working for the Elders group, went to the eight other groups to get feedback on what each group or entity would like to see the Elders contribute to the communities in terms of drug-and-alcohol-abuse prevention.

"At the end of the second day, I went back to the Elder group and told them what the other groups wanted them to do based on the priorities outlined by each of the groups. We then needed to determine whether they agreed with the recommendations and if they could see these things happening or how they



could put this into action. That was the whole idea of the summit," said Awashish.

From there, action plans were developed to be taken back to these departments after the event.

The hope with conducting these brainstorming events for each of the departments is that eventually the entire Cree Nation will be able to work in concert with each other instead of individual groups doing a little bit on their own for a large and overwhelming issue.

In 2010, a Cree Regional Working Group on Addictions was created to look at these issues and coordinate the summit. According to Awashish, the ability of those who participated in the summit to actually make an impact on addictions will depend on the commitments made there. The Working Group will now be focusing on keeping in touch with each of these groups to follow up on whether or not the groups will be able to incorporate any of the strategies or suggestions that came out of the summit.

While Awashish said some of these groups may have to have the plans approved by their department heads, he hopes that this can be dealt with quickly

as the Working Group will be setting up a website to show the rest of the Cree Nation who is working on what and how the issues are being addressed.

"The issue of addictions has not been a priority of any one group. We have talked about it but it is not a priority for a lot of people. The problem is that we have come to a point where we have normalized addictions. When we see someone drunk on the street, we laugh at them and we see it as normal. But this is not normal," said Awashish.

"We need to recognize that though this has become part of our lives, it is time to make a change."

Discussing the impact that the summit had on his own department, KC MacLeod from the Justice and Corrections department spoke about how much substance abuse plays a role in the Eeyou Istchee justice system.

"Addiction contributes to Crees being in the justice system for sure. If you talk to the Eeyou Istchee Police and get some of their stats, you are probably looking in the high 80s, maybe in the high 90s percentage of the files that involve either alcohol or drugs. It's the same thing when you look at the people who come into contact with the justice sys-

tem. That is taking aside youth protection cases and young offender cases but even some of the young offender cases involve alcohol and drugs,” said MacLeod.

MacLeod went on to say that his department would be working on prevention with the youth as part of a strategy to keep Crees from getting involved in the justice system in the first place.

It was revealed at the summit that the age at which Cree children will begin to experiment with alcohol and drugs is now as low as eight or nine.

“What we are finding is that the age at which Crees are getting involved with drugs and alcohol is getting younger. So we are saying that prevention needs to happen at a younger age and some of the information needs to be put out there. We need to abandon the idea that they are too young to know about these things because they already know about them from the internet, TV and movies,” said MacLeod.

“We need to give them some of the tools and equip them with information

and that is one of the things that we are trying to do in our department. On the corrections side, we are trying to ensure that the individuals who are incarcerated at the moment are getting the treatment they need while they are inside.”

The new chair of the CBHSSJB, Bella Moses Petawabano, delivered a powerful speech about the role of the Health Board in addressing addictions and what she personally will champion in her new role.

“At the Health Board we have avoided the problem,” said Moses Petawabano. “If you don’t believe me, then look at the resources we have in capital projects compared to what we have in mental-health services. I’m not blaming anyone more than myself when I say this because I have been involved in this area for most of my life and some of that as a senior manager.”

She also said that this summit had come at a “turning point” in her career as chair.

Later, *the Nation* spoke with Moses Petawabano about how the CBHSSJB

will be making changes when it comes to dealing with substance abuse and related mental-health issues.

“The Addictions Summit happened at the appropriate time as I am starting my new role as Cree Health Board chair. My campaign platform included improving access to psychosocial services and creating an open dialogue with Eeyouch,” she said.

“This summit was about bringing people together from all over Eeyou Istchee. Different organizations and entities identified priorities and discussed ways of working together to address issues of addictions.

“I have always believed that we can take concrete actions if we all work together and this was a good start.

“A single entity cannot take on a challenge such as addictions. We all need to commit to achieve results that will enable our population to overcome these conditions permanently,” added Moses Petawabano.

Moses Petawabano said that a great deal of support has already been added



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by allocating more resources to creating positions to help clients who need these services. As well, continuous improvements include proper training for the staff and to develop appropriate programming as well as improving the programming already being delivered. She said there was also a plan to provide the support necessary for those finishing treatment.

"We still do not have the appropriate facilities in the communities to help people with addictions and for a majority of Eeyouch who want to access to treatment they have to leave their communities.

"These people are for the most part those who can communicate in English or French. The only means available to our population which is in the community is what is presently offered through the Waskaganish Mobile Treatment programming and these are offered in Cree," said Moses Petawabano.

Then there is the issue of the family. Moses Petawabano believes that each family member needs to understand that addiction is a disease and that each individual will need ongoing support from within the family and the community.

And so, there are plans to build a traditional healing lodge within Eeyou

Istchee so that addicts and their families can work on healing together.

"Once this has been accomplished, I am confident that the programming that will be developed will meet the needs of our population. Services will be available in the Cree language as well as being culturally appropriate and it will also accommodate family members.

"In addition, the location of our healing centre will be in a traditional site near a Cree community," said Moses Petawabano.

She said there is already a plan in place to deliver on the healing lodge, provide needed services, and to address mental-health needs for the communities.

The recent Health Agreement saw the negotiation for the healing lodge. There are plans for improvement to the kinds of frontline services available in each community and the CBHSSJB is planning to increase and improve regional and specialized services for specific clientele as well as providing the support structure to the local teams.

In addition to that, there are also plans to assure that Cree methods are employed in these programs. Moses Petawabano said that a mental health steering committee was recently created to develop a comprehensive mental health plan.

And so while the issue of substance abuse and addiction may play a role in the everyday lives of Crees, the powers that be within the Cree Nation are joining forces to fight the devastation that the disease brings to Cree families.

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David beats Goliath

The Melancthon mega-quarry battle shows how coalition activism can best opponents worth billions

Even for the winners, it was a shock.

Last month, an unlikely coalition of local farmers, celebrity chefs, weekend cottagers and First Nations in Ontario learned they had successfully blocked what would have been the biggest open-pit mine in Canada. Buried by two years of bad press, beset by constant and growing opposition, and facing a thorough environmental assessment, Highland Companies announced Nov. 21 it would abandon its plan to build a 2,316-acre gravel pit in prime agricultural land in Melancthon township, about an hour north of Toronto.

For the losers, who were backed by a hedge fund worth \$25 billion, it was probably no less shocking that they were forced to pull the plug on the project.

For the rest of us, it's a model of tenacious community activism that builds a broad coalition of unusual allies to preserve a way of life that's deeply linked to its environment. For mining companies, and Highland Companies in particular, it's a sharp lesson in how not to do business. Community consent matters and can no longer be ignored.

I wrote about this project a year ago last summer. At the time, I noted the flagrant dishonesty the company used to buy up thousands of acres of agricultural land from local farmers whose families had been cultivating the land for generations. Only after it had assembled about 7,000 acres did the company announce it would actually be destroying the farmland in order to create a mega-quarry to mine limestone for gravel and concrete operations.

If the opposition to the project had remained based in the local farming community, the excavators would probably be already scraping away some of Canada's most fertile topsoil. But four farm families refused the big corporate cheques they were offered to sell their land, instead drumming up allies that eventually included hip urban foodies, environmentalists, popular musicians, wealthy weekenders and the nearby Beausoleil First Nation.

Jeff Monague, a Beausoleil band councillor, told the *Globe and Mail* that about 50 members of his band were regulars at anti-quarry protests. Montague said this kind of non-violent

resistance could serve as a template for land and water issues that affect Natives.

"It was a grassroots effort. It really came from the people," Monague said. "One of the things we're trying to show is that we can do these kinds of things without any direct conflict, that it can be non-violent all the way through. The young people can really learn from that."



For the company, the fatal error was "arrogance," said Carl Cosack, chair of the North Dufferin Agricultural Community Taskforce (NDACT). "You can't force something on a community of this nature without having repercussions," Cosack told a local newspaper.

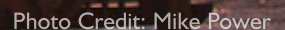
"Ontarians really pulled together," he added. "I'd challenge you to come up with any other issue that has brought as many people together as this has in recent memory. There hasn't been one that I can relate to."

The movement was highlighted by two gatherings notable for their originality. The first, "Foodstock," was held on the land owned by the four holdouts and focused on the mutual dependence between rural producers and urban consumers. It attracted 30,000 folks who were able to sample locally grown foods prepared by dozens of celebrity chefs. The second,

A central organizer of the two rallies was chef Michael Stadtländer. He also helped mobilize support from hundreds of fellow chefs across Canada by arguing industrial operations like

The message was consistently hammered home at farmers' markets, especially in Toronto, where petitions and pamphlets

In the end, community consent is essential. But only if the community works hard – and long – to express its consensus to decision-makers. As local farmer John Herndon said following the announcement, “It’s a testimony to what can be done if people get together and exercise their democratic rights and obligations.”





UNDER THE NORTHERN SKY

First Nations will rise to the challenges

by Xavier Kataquapit

Things are not looking good for remote First Nation communities in northern Canada. In particular, there are serious problems developing for communities up the James Bay coast and much of this has to do with global warming and changes in weather patterns.

My people, the Cree of James Bay, could always more or less count on food, products and fuel being shipped up by barge in the summer and by the ice road in the winter. Although air transport has been available for many years, it is reserved mainly for passenger travel as the cost is very high to move goods by aircraft.

Very rapidly, over the past few years, it is becoming obvious that the great changes in weather are affecting the movement of goods to remote First Nations. Weather is playing havoc with the winter ice roads. When I was a boy a few decades ago the winter road was built from Moosonee to the James Bay coastal First Nations in late December and it lasted until April on average. Now, with the great changes in weather the ice-road construction has to wait until late January and it melts much earlier in March. This means fewer necessities like food, fuel and consumer products are delivered to these remote First Nations.

As a child I recall the importance of the barge arriving in Attawapiskat. Even back then when weather conditions were more stable and predictable it took the great expertise of barge captains and local Elders to make sure these huge watercraft could navigate the shallow James Bay and make it into landing ports at our remote First Nations. With global warming we are seeing changes in the water levels of James Bay and that is causing great concern for the continued transportation of goods by barge.

The warming trends in the Far North also affects road construction that is being considered in all of these remote First Nations. You have to remember that much of the coastal area around the great James Bay is made up of muskeg, which is

more or less like sponge, and it is very difficult to construct anything on this type of surface, such as rail or roads. That is primarily why there are no roads or rail lines north of Moosonee.

I find it strange that our federal and provincial governments seem to be caught by surprise and little has been put in place to ensure that these remote First Nations will continue to get the necessary goods and fuel needed to provide for their people. As a matter of fact, rather than assist First Nations governments, tribal councils and communities with proactive support and development, they are doing their best to tear apart Native organizations all across the country by cutting their funding in many areas.

Obviously, as things go from bad to worse for First Nations, our governments want to sweep everything under a rug and are doing their best to smother the voice of First Nations people. However, this mean and nasty strategy will not work in the long run. First Nations organizations, government, tribal councils and communities will organize across the country to develop a stronger voice. We are masters at survival.

Long after the various ruling governments have faded into the past, my people will still be living on the land as our ancestors have done for thousands of years. We will still be honouring our connection to Mother Earth and taking care of each other.

As resource developers plan huge projects on traditional First Nation lands in the north, we will be insisting on being at the table as productive partners. We will be doing this at a time when our own development on our First Nations will be depending on a fair share of the wealth as resource projects take place. We will also be actively planning and participating in any roads or rail line development to make sure that in the haste of searching for treasure Mother Earth and our traditional way of life is respected.

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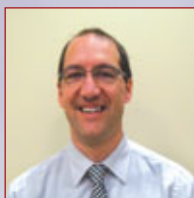
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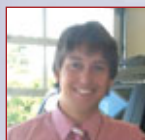
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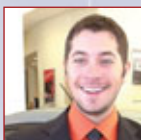


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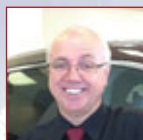
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